

DEPARTMENTS OF COMMERCE,
JUSTICE, AND STATE, THE JUDI-
CIARY, AND RELATED AGENCIES
APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2001

SPEECH OF

HON. MAXINE WATERS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 26, 2000

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union and under consideration the bill (H.R. 4690) making appropriations for the Departments of Commerce, Justice, and State, the Judiciary, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2001, and for other purposes:

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Chairman, the Jackson amendment would restore funding for international peacekeeping in the Commerce-Justice-State Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2001.

The Commerce-Justice-State Appropriations Act cuts funding for international peacekeeping efforts by \$241 million below the President's request. That is a 33 percent cut in an essential international program. These funds must be restored.

Peacekeeping operations play an important role in the maintenance and establishment of peace and stability in many parts of the world. In Cyprus, United Nations peacekeepers prevented two NATO allies from going to war. In El Salvador, peacekeepers helped bring a long and bloody civil war to an end. In Israel, peacekeeping operations on the Golan Heights helped preserve the peace between Israel and Syria.

I am particularly concerned about the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The war that erupted in the Congo in August of 1998 has been a widespread and destructive conflict, involving forces from several different countries. The peacekeeping efforts of the United Nations are essential to bring peace and stability to the Congo and the entire Great Lakes Region of Africa. Once peace and stability have been established, the Congo may begin to develop its natural resources, invest in health and education for its people, improve its infrastructure, pursue economic development and participate in mutually-beneficial trade with the United States.

There are conflicts all over the world that threaten peace and stability. These conflicts interfere with development and result in unimaginable suffering and countless violations of internationally recognized human rights. They also interfere with international trade and eliminate markets for American goods and services. They often cause significant increases in international refugee flows and illegal immigration into the United States. They threaten the lives of American citizens traveling abroad.

Peacekeeping allows the international community to attempt to restore peace, protect civilians and promote stability and development. Support for and participation in peacekeeping missions allow the United States to promote American values. In countries experiencing internal conflicts, peacekeeping is an essential ingredient in the restoration of democracy. Peacekeeping is a critical investment in our national security.

The cost of peacekeeping is small, and the benefits are tremendous. I urge my colleagues

to support the Jackson amendment and restore funding for peacekeeping.

INVESTIGATION OF MURDERS IN AL-KOSHEH, EGYPT

HON. ROBERT B. ADERHOLT

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 27, 2000

Mr. ADERHOLT. Mr. Speaker, today in a meeting of the House Appropriations Committee to consider the Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations bill for Fiscal Year 2001, I added the following Report language to the paragraph about U.S. financial aid to Egypt: "Nevertheless, the Committee is concerned about ongoing violence experienced by the Christian minority in Egypt. The Committee urges Egypt to expedite the investigations of the murders of 2000 and 1998 in Al-Kosheh, and of the 1998 interrogations."

Mr. Speaker, it is a fact that Egypt is a valuable ally and has greatly helped U.S. efforts to advance peace in the Middle East. It is also a fact that Christians in Egypt, especially Coptic Christians, face ongoing violence and are in need of full protection of the Egyptian Judicial system. The worst of these outbreaks is the murder of 21 persons in January, 2000 in the town of Al-Kosheh, just a few weeks after I visited Egypt with three other Members of Congress.

My report language expresses the concern of the Committee about this violence and urges Egypt to expedite investigations regarding this incident but also of events in 1998 in the same small town. There were two murders in 1998 and allegations of brutal interrogations by the Police, 1014 Christians were arrested and interrogated.

President Mubarak ordered an investigation of these arrests, and in August of 1999, 129 persons were interviewed within the course of two days. The interviewing process lapsed and then resumed in October of 1999. To date, only 400 of those 1014 persons have been interviewed. That figure includes the 129. A conclusion of the investigation likely would suggest the dismissal or prosecution of several members of the Egyptian police. There is precedent for such action.

When tourists were killed in Luxor, the reaction of Cairo was swift and decisive, including the appointment of a new Minister of the Interior, who oversees the police. That sent a powerful message throughout the country, and Egypt is currently a very safe country to visit. The great majority of Muslim citizens of Egypt are law-abiding and desire peace. I am afraid that because of concerns about possibly energizing extremist Muslim groups to the point of violence, Cairo is reluctant to prosecute Muslims when there are incidents of violence against Christians.

Christians face a range of legal challenges and are in need of protection from violence. Since there is no stated government policy of discrimination, it is reasonable for Christian citizens to expect full justice from their courts, just as Muslim citizens do.

Mr. Speaker, I suggest that the taxpayers of the United States would be more than happy to see some of their aid to Egypt used to pay for additional personnel or equipment which

would expedite these investigations and lead to the prosecution of any found persons found guilty of torture or other violations of civil rights. I am especially concerned that Shayboub William Aarsal has been falsely accused and sentenced to 15 years hard labor even though the only two witnesses recanted their testimony and stated that their original accusations were coerced.

In accordance with Egypt's strategic alliance with the United States, the Foreign Operations Subcommittee agreed to the President's request to expedite a portion of Egypt's military aid. The adoption of these two sentences by the Full Committee in the Report expresses the expectation of the Appropriations Committee that Egypt will make progress on these important human rights matters.

HONORING THE CERKVENIK FAMILY

HON. JAMES L. OBERSTAR

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 27, 2000

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to honor a remarkable family in my congressional district: the Cerkenik family, who will celebrate their heritage on July 6th, 2000, with a gathering on the Mesabi Iron Range in Northeastern Minnesota. The Cerkenik family had its beginnings in the Republic of Slovenia in northwestern Yugoslavia. As the people of Slovenia celebrate their ninth year of independence from Yugoslavia this week, it is an appropriate time to recognize the people of Slovenia and those of Slovene ancestry in the United States. I am delighted that the Cerkenik family is preparing to honor their Slovene ancestral roots next week.

Anton Cerkenik was born in the small village of Vreme Britof on March 4, 1876, in a large pink stucco house, which his grandfather Joseph built in 1790. The family called it the House of Jelovsek. Joseph's daughter, Maria, married Matije Cerkenik, son of Jacob, and from this union six children were born—a girl, Mary, and five boys, Matije, Franc, Joze, Pavel, and Anton. When Maria married Matija, the name of the house changed to the House of Cerkenik. It held this distinction for over 100 years until Stanka Cerkenik married and the name changed to that of her husband and the house then became known as the House of Milavec.

Anton had a great love of adventure, which led him astray from his homeland to the coffee fields of Brazil. He later returned to the army in Yugoslavia and immigrated to the United States. From Ellis Island, he traveled to Mountain Iron, Minnesota, where he worked in the iron ore mines. He lived in a boarding house owned by John and Agnes Simonich who became his best friends and godparents to his children. He met and married Johanna Intihar at the Simonich boarding house. She came to the United States from Strajesce, near Cerknica, Slovenia, in 1906. She was the daughter of Franc and Ursula Sevc Intihar who had five other children—John, Ursula, Niza, Mary, and Frank. Anton and Johanna had nine children, Anton, Mary, Ann, Florence, Frances, Frank, Amelia, Rose, and Edward.

Anton built a house in the Costin location of Mountain Iron, where the family had a large